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International Year of Sustainable Energy for All, 2012

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The International Year of Sustainable Energy for All, 2012, has provided an effective platform for raising global awareness of the importance of sustainable energy and its role in alleviating poverty, reducing inequality and promoting sustainable development. In conjunction with the "Sustainable Energy for All" initiative of the Secretary-General, the observance of the International Year has helped raise the energy issue to the top of the agendas of many national and international decision makers and has sparked unprecedented commitments for action that promise to advance solutions to critical energy issues. Activities and partnerships initiated in 2012 by Member States, international organizations, the private and public sectors and civil society are helping to create an enabling environment at all levels for the promotion of universal access, the more efficient use of energy and increased reliance on renewable energy. Further efforts are now necessary to maintain and capitalize upon the significant momentum generated in 2012.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 65/151, requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with relevant agencies within the United Nations system and UN-Energy, to organize and coordinate activities to be undertaken in 2012, the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All.

2. In that resolution, the General Assembly recognized that access to modern affordable energy services in developing countries was essential for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and sustainable development, which would help to reduce poverty and to improve the conditions and standard of living for the majority of the world's population.

3. The General Assembly also encouraged all Member States, the United Nations system and all other actors to use the International Year as a platform for increasing awareness of the importance of addressing energy issues, including modern energy services for all, access to affordable energy, energy efficiency and the sustainability of energy sources and use, for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development and the protection of the global climate, and to promote action at local, national, regional and international levels.

4. The first section of the present report provides the contextual background of the International Year, which illustrates the importance of addressing energy issues. The following sections provide a comprehensive summary of the related activities and initiatives carried out by the Secretary-General, in conjunction with relevant agencies within the United Nations system and UN-Energy, Member States and other global actors. The final section sets out recommendations for Member States and United Nations entities with a view to sustaining and capitalizing upon the significant momentum generated during the Year.

II. Background on Sustainable Energy for All

5. The world faces urgent and interconnected challenges related to modern energy services. One out of every five people on Earth has no access to electricity or the opportunities that it provides for health, safety and well-being, working, learning or operating a business. Twice as many people — nearly 3 billion — use wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste to cook their meals and heat their homes, exposing themselves and their families to smoke and fumes that damage their health and kill nearly 2 million people a year. Without access to modern energy services, it is not possible to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

6. The availability of adequate, affordable and reliable energy services is essential for alleviating poverty, improving human welfare, raising living standards and, ultimately, achieving sustainable development. Adequate sustainable energy services are critical inputs in providing for human health, education, transport, telecommunications and water availability and sanitation.

7. Achieving sustainable energy for all involves the development of systems that support the optimal use of energy resources in an equitable and socially inclusive manner while minimizing environmental impacts. Integrated national and regional

infrastructures for energy supply, efficient transmission and distribution systems and demand programmes that emphasize energy efficiency are necessary for sustainable energy systems.

8. Where modern energy services are plentiful, the challenge is different. Emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases resulting from the burning of fossil fuels are contributing to changes in the Earth's climate, to the detriment of all those who depend on the planet's natural systems for survival. Extreme weather events may grow more frequent and intense in rich and poor countries alike, devastating lives, infrastructure, institutions and budgets. Climate change threatens food and water security for hundreds of millions of people around the world, undermining the most essential foundations of local, national and global stability. Competition for scarce resources is increasing, exacerbating old conflicts and creating new ones. As lands degrade, forests fall and sea levels rise, the movement of people driven from their homes by environmental change may reshape the human geography of the planet.

9. Scientists warn that if the world continues on its current path, global temperatures could rise by more than 4 degrees Celsius by the end of the twenty-first century. Such a temperature increase would affect everything from the world economy to human health worldwide and the health of the ecosystems that sustain life on Earth.

10. World challenges — including impacts resulting from climate change, limited natural resources, rapid increases in energy demand and loss of biodiversity — demand a greater reliance on clean sources of energy. The accessibility and affordability of clean energy technologies are key to ensuring sustainable energy for all. Rapid advances in technologies that produce energy from renewable sources and use it more efficiently have made clean energy more affordable and accessible than ever, and technologies are being developed that promise cleaner ways of using fossil fuels. What is needed is a transformation of the world's energy systems to address these interconnected challenges and thus benefit all countries.

III. Activities and initiatives of the Secretary-General

11. In response to and consistent with resolution 65/151, the Secretary-General launched his "Sustainable Energy for All" initiative to mobilize action from all sectors of society to meet these global challenges. The Secretary-General set three interlinked objectives to be achieved by 2030: providing universal access to modern energy services; doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

12. The Secretary-General's initiative, guided by his High-level Group on Sustainable Energy for All and its Co-Chairs, has already catalysed significant commitments to action by Governments, the private sector and civil society in support of the achievement of his three objectives. Those commitments have been made in line with a Global Action Agenda.

A. High-level Group on Sustainable Energy for All

13. In September 2011, to guide the work carried out under the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, the Secretary-General appointed a High-level Group on Sustainable Energy for All, comprising distinguished global leaders from around the world. Drawn from the business and financial sectors, Governments, civil society and the United Nations system, the Group has worked to mobilize a broad range of stakeholders who can catalyse commitments and form partnerships in support of achieving sustainable energy for all. It is co-chaired by two leading figures from business and public service: Charles Holliday, Chair of Bank of America, and Kandeh Yumkella, Chair of UN-Energy and Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

14. The Group was requested by the Secretary-General to develop a Global Action Agenda, a practical road map for how stakeholders from all sectors of society could work together under the initiative to achieve the three objectives established by the Secretary-General, on energy access, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

B. Global Action Agenda

15. The Global Action Agenda was developed and endorsed by the High-level Group in April 2012. It charts a way forward by providing tangible entry points for all stakeholders to take action, linking individual, national, regional and global efforts with the ambitious objectives set for the Secretary-General's initiative.

16. The Global Action Agenda provides a strategy for engagement by Governments, the private sector and civil society. It offers the United Nations as a convening platform where key stakeholders from both developing and developed countries can mobilize bold commitments, foster new public-private partnerships and leverage the significant investments needed to make the transformative changes necessary in the world's energy systems.

17. The Global Action Agenda identifies 11 "action areas", which are designed for the achievement of the initiative's three objectives. These action areas provide a framework for organizing collaborative efforts across all relevant sectors. They also identify sets of high-impact opportunities that will drive progress and catalyse change.

18. The action areas are classified into "sectoral action areas" and "enabling action areas". The sectoral action areas are: (a) modern cooking appliances and fuels; (b) distributed electricity solutions; (c) grid infrastructure and supply efficiency; (d) large-scale renewable power; (e) industrial and agricultural processes; (f) transportation; and (g) buildings and appliances. The enabling action areas are: (a) energy planning and policies; (b) business model and technology innovation; (c) finance and risk management; and (d) capacity-building and knowledge-sharing. Each of the action areas includes a number of high-impact opportunities that Governments, business and civil society can rally around.

19. The implementation plan for the initiative includes the development of a Framework for Action and a communications strategy and plan, and the creation of task forces assigned to assess the achievement of the three major objectives of the initiative.

20. The Framework for Action identifies the value of participation for each major stakeholder group, the benefits of stakeholder collaboration, the structure of the commitment process and the guiding principles of the initiative. It recognizes that progress towards sustainable energy for all can be obstructed by multiple, interlocking barriers and that overcoming those barriers will require multiple, mutually reinforcing actions, appropriate for local circumstances and resource availability. The Framework invites stakeholders to form partnerships, with their separate commitments focused on the common goal of sustainable energy for all.

21. The communications strategy and plan identifies the main communications objectives related to the initiative, including: raising awareness of existing needs, benefits and business opportunities by accomplishing the objectives of the initiative; communicating the business case to the private sector, civil society and Governments in order to drive each towards making meaningful and ambitious commitments; and positioning Sustainable Energy for All as an effective platform for laying out ambitious objectives and bringing the right players together to make meaningful change on the issues of energy access, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

22. In summary, the Global Action Agenda charts a path forward for the initiative and its stakeholders. It also aims to help countries and stakeholders create their own pathways towards sustainable energy for all, including technology choices based on their unique national and local circumstances.

23. The Global Action Agenda has already succeeded in accelerating momentum in support of the initiative and resulted in numerous and substantial commitments to action. This progress will be monitored and tracked, and an accountability framework is being developed.

C. Commitments to action

24. Throughout the International Year, significant progress has been made in securing tangible commitments to action in support of Sustainable Energy for All. Those commitments address all three of the Secretary-General's objectives. For example, they include efforts to scale up the production of solar-powered lamps, increase corporate financing for energy efficiency and provide grass-roots training programmes on renewable energy.

25. The initiative benefits from the strong leadership of the Secretary-General and the heads of relevant agencies of the United Nations system, as well as the active support of Governments in every region.

26. Commitments to the initiative announced at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development include the following:

(a) More than 50 developing countries are now participating in the initiative, with more coming on board;

(b) More than $50 billion has been mobilized from the private sector and investors;

(c) Tens of billions of dollars have been committed by multilateral development banks in Asia, Europe and Latin America;

(d) Hundreds of actions have been catalysed and commitments have been made in support of the three core objectives;

(e) Commitments to support energy access will provide more than 1 billion people with access to modern energy during the lifespan of the initiative;

(f) New public-private partnerships are forming on transport, energy efficiency, solar cooking, finance and energy access for the poor.

27. It is important to note that these commitments to Sustainable Energy for All do not replace previous pledges of official development assistance made by Governments. The commitments secured under the Secretary-General's initiative are in addition to traditional pledges of such assistance.

D. Tracking progress

28. **Baseline report**: monitoring progress towards the three objectives is essential to sustaining political momentum over the lifetime of the initiative. Reliable statistics regarding energy access, energy efficiency and renewable energy are needed to establish a starting point. With this in mind, the Secretary-General's High-level Group requested that a baseline report be produced. The report will be published in January 2013.

29. The baseline report has three goals: (a) provide an overview of the state of progress towards the achievement of the initiative's three objectives based on available evidence; (b) build consensus among relevant institutions on the most suitable approaches for tracking progress through 2030; and (c) serve as a basis for the production of periodic tracking reports on progress towards each of the three objectives.

30. The preparation of the baseline report is to be coordinated jointly by the World Bank and the International Energy Agency with the support of a steering group comprising other international energy knowledge institutions, including the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation, the International Renewable Energy Agency, Practical Action, the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Energy Council and the World Health Organization (WHO).

IV. Activities and initiatives of Member States

31. Many activities and initiatives have been undertaken by Member States during the implementation of the International Year, including a series of roll-out events and intergovernmental efforts. Those actions have proved to be very valuable for the formulation of commitments at the national, regional and global levels.

A. Roll-out events

32. **Global roll-out, Abu Dhabi, 16-19 January 2012**: the World Future Energy Summit, organized by the Government of the United Arab Emirates and Masdar

City, served as the global roll-out of the International Year. The conference was attended by more than 25,000 participants, including 3,000 delegates from 148 countries, three Heads of State, ministers, the Secretary-General, heads of intergovernmental agencies and more than 700 exhibitors.

33. **Asian regional roll-out, New Delhi, 1 February 2012**: hosted by The Energy and Resources Institute and the United Nations Foundation, this conference included more than 650 participants and served as the Asian regional roll-out for the International Year. The distinguished speakers included, among others, Farooq Abdullah, Minister of New and Renewable Energy of India and a member of the Secretary-General's High-level Group.

34. **European regional roll-out, Brussels, 8 February 2012**: the European roll-out of the International Year was hosted by the European Parliament and the European Commission, including Andris Piebalgs, European Commissioner for Development and a member of the Secretary-General's High-level Group. Thirty European Union, Government, non-profit organization and private sector representatives participated.

35. **African regional roll-out, Nairobi, 18 February 2012**: hosted by UNEP, this conference included more than 100 high-level participants and featured panel discussions focused on energy access, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

36. **Small island developing States roll-out, Bridgetown, Barbados, 7 and 8 May 2012**: UNDP and the Government of Barbados jointly organized a conference for small island developing States on achieving sustainable energy for all and an informal ministerial meeting for such States on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The conference was attended by Prime Ministers, Deputy Prime Ministers, ministers and senior policymakers from 32 African, Indian Ocean, Pacific and Caribbean small island developing States, as well as representatives of regional organizations, the private sector and civil society, to discuss energy security and sustainability. A primary outcome of the conference was the Barbados Declaration on Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in Small Island Developing States.

37. **Pacific regional roll-out, Suva, 18 May 2012**: this conference was organized jointly by the Government of Fiji, the secretariat of the Pacific Community, regional organizations, UNDP and the University of the South Pacific. It raised awareness of the importance of energy security for Pacific small island States.

38. **Nigerian national launch, Abuja, 23 August 2012**: this event was hosted by the Office of the President of Nigeria and organized by UNIDO. The conference included several ministers from the Government of Nigeria and representatives of the private sector and civil society.

B. Intergovernmental efforts in support of Sustainable Energy for All

39. **African Energy Ministers Conference, 15 and 16 September 2011**: African ministers responsible for energy gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa, for a conference entitled "On the road to Durban: promoting sustainable energy access in Africa". Its outcome document, the Johannesburg Declaration, welcomed the International Year and the Secretary-General's initiative.

40. **European Union Sustainable Energy for All Summit, 16 April 2012**: this conference included the launch of the "Energizing Development" initiative by European Commission President José Manuel Barroso. The Commission and the Ministers of Development of European Union member States also underlined their commitment to achieving the Secretary-General's objectives for the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative.

41. **Clean Energy Ministerial meeting, 25 and 26 April 2012**: leaders representing the 23 Governments of the Clean Energy Ministerial and the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative outlined specific commitments of participating countries and private sector leaders to promote improved energy efficiency, renewable energy technologies and increased energy access around the world. The commitments built upon two years of work by the Ministerial and supported the goal of sustainable energy for all by 2030.

42. **United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, 20-22 June 2012**: sustainable energy for all was a consistent, high-profile theme throughout the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Several high-level side events on the issue were organized, including a well-attended event held in relation to the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative and an Energy Day held on 19 June. Events featured Heads of State and ministers as well as leaders from the private sector and civil society. Significant commitments to action in support of the achievement of sustainable energy for all were announced during several of these forums and were included in the online Conference registry of voluntary commitments. The Conference outcome document also took note of the Sustainable Energy for All initiative and the determination of stakeholders to make sustainable energy for all a reality.

V. Activities and initiatives of international organizations, entities of the United Nations system and other partners

43. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and IRENA are collaborating to assist the work of the Clean Energy Ministerial Multilateral Solar and Wind Working Group through the identification and facilitation of access to available datasets (including in situ and space observations and model data) from WMO programmes and other initiatives involving the organization.

44. WHO is contributing to the Sustainable Energy for All initiative by providing an evidence base regarding the health impacts of energy, as well as tracking systems that monitor access to efficient and renewable fuels and technologies in households and health-care facilities. Key health indicators of progress on sustainable energy include measures for:

(a) Household access to modern, low-emissions heating/cooking technologies;

(b) Energy access at community health facilities, particularly for reliable electricity;

(c) The health burden from air-pollution-related diseases and injuries;

(d) The health equity impacts of energy policies, in terms of the access of poor and vulnerable populations;

(e) Clean electricity generation across the energy supply chain, in terms of reduced pollution, greater efficiencies and reliance on renewable energy sources.

45. The Multi-Partner Programme of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on "Energy-Smart Food for People and Climate" represents the organization's commitment to the implementation of the Sustainable Energy for All initiative. Links between energy and food security are now stronger than ever. The food sector accounts for approximately 30 per cent of the world's total energy consumption, with the agrifood chain emitting approximately 20 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions. The intensification of agriculture must be gradually decoupled from the use of fossil fuels in order to meet both the food needs and the sustainable energy needs of a growing global population.

46. The FAO programme seeks to address those challenges by improving energy efficiency at all stages of the agrifood chain, increasing the use of renewable energy, and improving access to modern energy services through integrated food and energy production. FAO is also leading the development of an international community of practice in this area as well as a facility for the improved coordination of efforts at the national and international levels.

47. As the Vice-Chair of UN-Energy and the host of the United Nations Resident Coordinator system, UNDP has provided extensive policy, resource and staffing support for the Secretary-General's initiative and promoted awareness-raising and action, especially at the country level, in observance of the International Year.

48. UNDP has provided significant support to developing countries to further political momentum in support of sustainable energy for all and the Secretary-General's objectives. UNDP has mobilized the United Nations Resident Coordinator system to facilitate country dialogues and engagement with the initiative, including support for national processes leading to the implementation of countries' sustainable energy priorities and goals. In collaboration with multilateral development banks, the European Union and Norway, UNDP is supporting the preparation of a rapid assessment and gap analysis that, to date, has been initiated or completed by more than 30 countries.

49. In conjunction with the Barbados conference for small island developing States on achieving sustainable energy for all, UNDP hosted a meeting of SIDS Dock, a sustainable energy initiative among the members of the Alliance of Small Island States supported by UNDP and the World Bank. A declaration by Government representatives of SIDS Dock affirmed support for Sustainable Energy for All and SIDS Dock as the vehicle for realizing the objectives of the Secretary-General's initiative.

50. UNDP supported a number of regional events, including roll-out events in Asia (Delhi) and Africa (Nairobi) and thematic workshops, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency regional workshop on the theme "Accelerating universal energy access through the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency", held in Accra in October 2011, to promote sustainable development in the ECOWAS region and in countries members of the Community.

51. UNDP and the Global Compact jointly encouraged local chapters of the Compact to work in partnership with the United Nations system and host

Governments to contribute to the objectives of the Sustainable Energy for All initiative at the country level.

52. Under the partnership between UNDP and the non-governmental organization Practical Action, four events to launch the *Poor People's Energy Outlook 2012* were held in 2012, in Bangladesh, Kenya, the Sudan and Zimbabwe, in support of the objectives of the International Year and the Sustainable Energy for All initiative. Two additional events took place, in Nepal and Peru, in August 2012.

53. UNDP and the Inter-American Development Bank established a partnership to provide support to countries members of the Bank for the preparation of Sustainable Energy for All rapid assessments and gap analyses. By June 2012, formal requests for this joint support were received from 16 countries, and additional countries have indicated their interest in carrying out gap analysis.

54. UNDP is launching an initiative with the New Partnership for Africa's Development Planning and Coordinating Agency, in collaboration with regional organizations (ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States, the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), to develop an institutional framework and programme response with a view to the coordinated planning and implementation of Sustainable Energy for All objectives.

55. Several partnerships supported by UNEP contributed to the International Year and strengthened action in support of Sustainable Energy for All — for example, the Global Efficient Lighting Partnership Programme ("en.lighten") and the Global Bioenergy Partnership.

56. Through the en.lighten initiative, UNEP has brought together Government officials and international lighting experts from more than 40 public and private organizations to provide guidance for countries in developing and implementing successful national efficient-lighting strategies. They have jointly set 2016 as the target year in which to phase out incandescent lamps worldwide while ensuring that efficient replacement lamps meet global minimum standards and spent lamps are disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. To date, 46 countries on four continents have already joined en.lighten, with more expected to become engaged.

57. The Global Bioenergy Partnership, which includes both UNEP and FAO as members, with FAO housing its secretariat, has defined a set of voluntary, science-based sustainability indicators for bioenergy and developed a common methodological framework for measuring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions reductions resulting from the use of bioenergy. Going forward, the Partnership plans to work on capacity-building activities for sustainable bioenergy.

58. UNEP also organized the African roll-out of the International Year in Nairobi in February.

59. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) is supporting several events related to Sustainable Energy for All. A forum on energy for sustainable development, to be held in Kyrgyzstan from 12 to 14 September 2012, is being organized jointly by the Government of Kyrgyzstan, ECE, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and UNDP. The forum is a follow-up to the international energy efficiency forums held in 2010 and 2011 in Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, which included Government ministers and officials responsible for

energy and sustainable development in countries in Central Asia and neighbouring areas. Participants issued a joint statement on the critical role that international cooperation could play in promoting energy efficiency and access to cleaner energy.

60. In May 2012, ESCAP, at its sixty-eighth session, adopted a resolution on connectivity for energy security, in which the Commission requested its Executive Secretary to identify options on regional energy connectivity, including an intergovernmental framework that could be developed for an integrated regional power grid. A report on each option will be presented at the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum to be held in the Russian Federation in May 2013. At the Forum, a ministerial declaration and regional action plan are expected to outline a vision for regional cooperation on energy security and the sustainable use of energy.

61. On this basis, ESCAP is developing the concept of the Asian Energy Highway to provide a regional framework for expanding the transmission system to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy through market mechanisms that support regional integration.

62. As the secretariat for UN-Energy and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has provided valuable support for the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative and for the observance of the International Year. The Department worked on the organization of energy events at the Conference, including the Energy Day. Currently, the Department is leading and coordinating a public-private partnership initiative entitled "Minimum Electricity Access" that supports the electrification of rural isolated communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In addition, it is launching a programme for the conduct of comprehensive country assessments on sustainable energy development. The programme supports the enabling action area "energy planning and policies" of the Secretary-General's Global Action Agenda.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

63. **Overall, the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All has been a success. The Year has underscored the central role of sustainable energy as a major factor in alleviating poverty, reducing inequality and curbing environmental risks, including those associated with climate change, while strengthening sustainable development and global prosperity.**

64. **The observance of the International Year has raised global awareness of the importance of energy for sustainable development and has brought the issue to the top of the agenda of decision makers at the national and international levels. Furthermore, it has sparked unprecedented commitments for actions that promise to advance long-term solutions to critical energy issues.**

65. **The International Year also has served as a platform for the building of partnerships among Governments, organizations of the United Nations system, the private sector, civil society and other actors. It has provided an effective forum for the sharing of experiences and good practices to build more inclusive national energy sectors that will improve access to sustainable energy.**

66. **The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and major activities carried out during the International Year, in particular the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative, and the regional roll-outs have**

had an important impact in terms of strengthening the global commitment to advancing the use of sustainable energy. Further efforts are now needed to maintain and capitalize upon the significant momentum generated during the Year.

67. **In the light of the foregoing, the General Assembly may wish to consider the following recommendations:**

(a) **To further strengthen partnerships with academia, civil society organizations, the private sector, the media and the United Nations system in support of the overall objective of sustainable energy for all;**

(b) **To continue to build on the momentum created, while increasing the awareness of the importance of energy, including modern energy services for all, access to affordable energy, energy efficiency and the sustainability of energy sources and use, and to promote action at the local, national, regional and international levels by utilizing appropriate means at its disposal, including, inter alia, the designation of an International Decade on Sustainable Energy for All.**